ESDC-STATCAN JOINT DATA STRATEGY

Presented by:

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) and Statistics Canada

United Nations Statistics Division
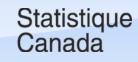Webinar: Supercharging Your Data Strategy Through Collaboration, October 8th, 2024

Context

A data strategy is a coherent plan for organizing, governing, analyzing, and deploying an organization's information assets[1] towards the optimal use and reuse of data, in order to provide service and value to citizens.

A joint data strategy achieves the above but among like-minded partners to clarify roles and responsibilities, improve synergies, efficiencies and impacts of the partnership by systemizing joint activities in support of their respective mandates and strategic data priorities.

[1] Davenport, Thomas H. 2017 "What's your Data Strategy" *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 2017 Edition

Purpose

I.   Introduce the ESDC-StatCan Joint Data Strategy

II. Showcase progress and outcomes achieved through collaboration

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Who are we?

Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) is a department of the Government of Canada responsible for developing, managing and delivering social programs and services. ESDC's mandate is to build a stronger and more inclusive Canada, to support Canadians in helping them live productive and rewarding lives and improving Canadians' quality of life.

Statistics Canada (StatCan) is the national statistical office. The agency ensures Canadians have the key information on Canada's economy, society and environment that they require to function effectively as citizens and decision makers. Statistics Canada is legislated by the *Statistics Act* to serve the whole of Canada and each of the provinces and territories. In addition to conducting a census every 5 years, Statistics Canada manages over 350 active surveys on virtually all aspects of Canadian life.

Partnership / Relationship

ESDC and StatCan have an interdependent data partnership and relationship:

- ESDC is one of the largest consumers of StatCan data and stewards large amounts of administrative data to deliver programs to citizens.

- ESDC funds several Statistics Canada survey programs, transferring funds to invest in statistical products and services provided by the statistical agency.

Governance Structure

- The Joint Data Strategy **Governance Process builds on an existing governance structure** and is defined in our Terms of Reference:

  1. ESDC & StatCan Director General

     o Director General Strategic Coordination Committee

  2. Assistant Chief Statistician & Assistant Deputy Minister
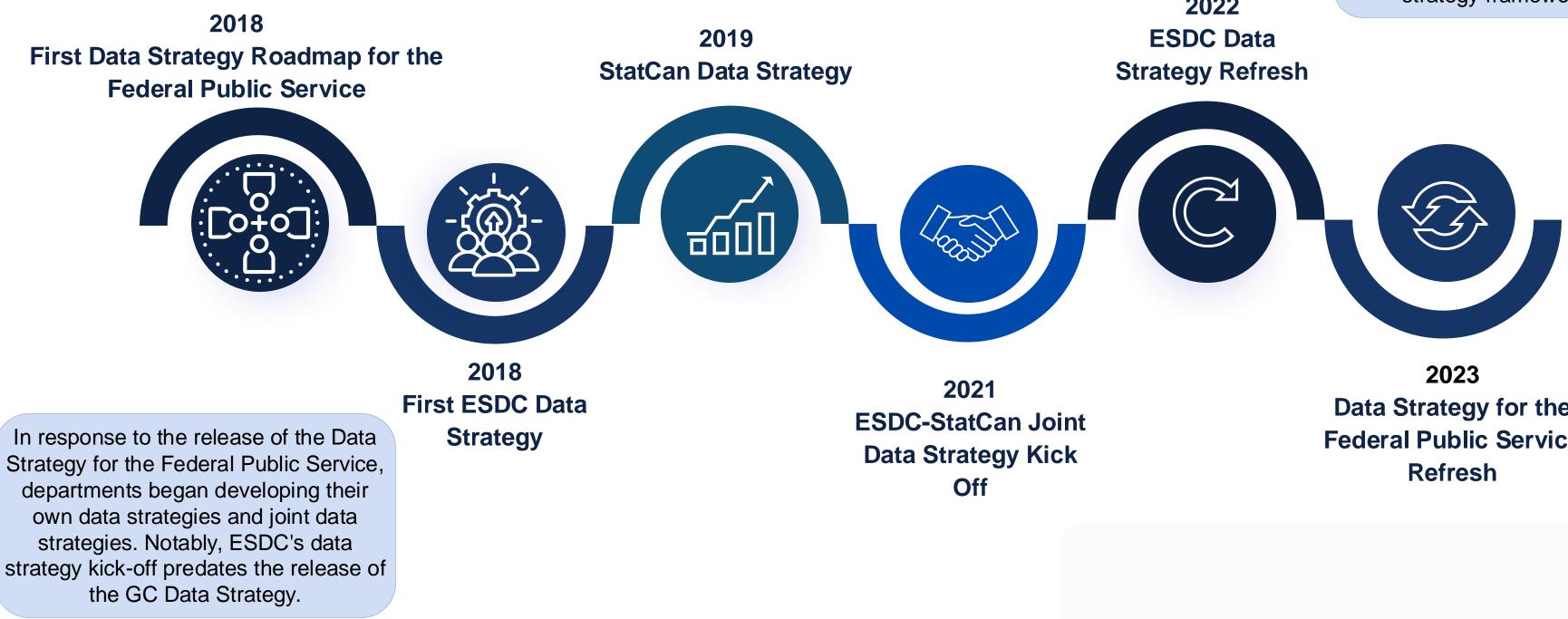
  3. Deputy Minister & Chief Statistician

  Collaboration occurs at every level, including through a joint strategy working group that engages with subject matter experts.

Background

2018
First Data Strategy Roadmap for the Federal Public Service

2018
First ESDC Data Strategy

2019
StatCan Data Strategy

2021
ESDC-StatCan Joint Data Strategy Kick Off

2022
ESDC Data Strategy Refresh

2023
Data Strategy for the Federal Public Service Refresh

In 2021, ESDC and StatCan agreed to enhance collaboration and adopt a more strategic approach by developing a sound joint data strategy framework.

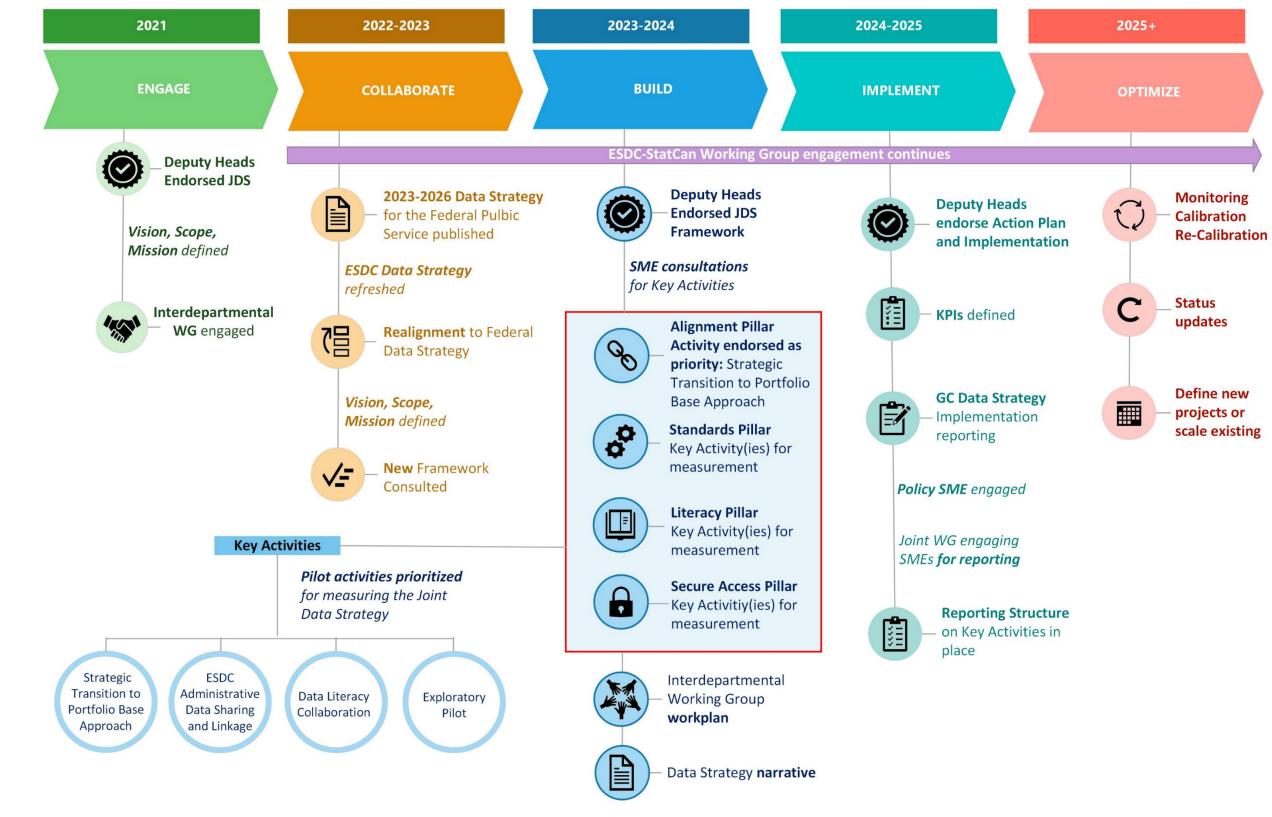In response to the release of the Data Strategy for the Federal Public Service, departments began developing their own data strategies and joint data strategies. Notably, ESDC's data strategy kick-off predates the release of the GC Data Strategy.

ESDC-StatCan Joint Data Strategy Roadmap

Latest update: July 16/24

2021	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025+
ENGAGE	COLLABORATE	BUILD	IMPLEMENT	OPTIMIZE

ESDC-StatCan Working Group engagement continues

2021 (ENGAGE)

- **Deputy Heads Endorsed JDS**
- *Vision, Scope, Mission defined*
- **Interdepartmental WG engaged**

2022-2023 (COLLABORATE)

- **2023-2026 Data Strategy** for the Federal Public Service published
- *ESDC Data Strategy refreshed*
- **Realignment** to Federal Data Strategy
- *Vision, Scope, Mission defined*
- **New** Framework Consulted

Key Activities

Pilot activities prioritized for measuring the Joint Data Strategy

- Strategic Transition to Portfolio Base Approach
- ESDC Administrative Data Sharing and Linkage
- Data Literacy Collaboration
- Exploratory Pilot

2023-2024 (BUILD)

- **Deputy Heads Endorsed JDS Framework**
- *SME consultations for Key Activities*

- **Alignment Pillar Activity endorsed as priority:** Strategic Transition to Portfolio Base Approach
- **Standards Pillar** Key Activity(ies) for measurement
- **Literacy Pillar** Key Activity(ies) for measurement
- **Secure Access Pillar** Key Activitiy(ies) for measurement

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- Interdepartmental Working Group **workplan**
- Data Strategy **narrative**

2024-2025 (IMPLEMENT)

- **Deputy Heads endorse Action Plan and Implementation**
- **KPIs** defined
- **GC Data Strategy** Implementation reporting
- *Policy SME engaged*
- *Joint WG engaging SMEs for reporting*
- **Reporting Structure** on Key Activities in place

2025+ (OPTIMIZE)

- **Monitoring Calibration Re-Calibration**
- **Status updates**
- **Define new projects or scale existing**

Strategic journey towards a future state of the ESDC-StatCan JDS

Latest update: September 6th, 2024

ESDC-StatCan JDS Pillars - Key Activites	Past State	Current State	Future State
Alignment Pillar Key activity: ESDC Administrative Data Sharing and Linkage Roadmap	Interactions between departments were **strictly Branch-driven.**	**Learning to discern** what variables are **fit-for-purpose** for various needs, including level of disaggregation, data gaps, insufficient data linkages, and miscommunication.	*A **common understanding of data gaps** are identified. Variables and dataset disaggregation levels are fit-for-purpose, with sufficient data linkages and effective communication.*
Standards Pillar Key activity: GC Working Group on Standards	Each department was working within and **using their own data standards.**	**Data interoperability is limited** due to lack of common standards resulting in misunderstandings of what variables can or should be used to measure program outcomes.	***Data Process frameworks are shared and align*** *to both departments' needs and support the larger Federal Data Strategy goals. Data sharing, linkage, and integration is enhanced.*
Data Literacy pillar Key activity: Data Literacy Collaboration	**Data Literacy was in its early stages** attempting to determine a literacy baseline**.**	Data Literacy and Policy Literacy are **disconnected and siloed** and departments should continue to align efforts.	*An **increased understanding of data, data acquisition, and data governance** between the two organizations is embedded in their data culture and creates more effective, efficient, and robust collaboration.*
Secure Access pillar Key activity: Exploratory pilot	Data was stored across departments without interdepartmental awareness or data stewardship; **ESDC-requested data was accessed for a single research purpose.**	**Both departments face barriers in accessing and acquiring data**. Organizational mandates, directives, Acts, IT systems, and privacy and confidentiality policies impede data access and acquisistion.	***Data is no longer siloed;*** *it is easily accessible and easily understood across departments. Data inventories are continuously shared to determine potential common uses.*

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THEME: GAPS in data availabilities
- Consultation on data gaps, prioritize data needs, leverage multi-sources data availabilities

THEME: DISAGGREGATION of variables and data
- Targeted disaggregation and classification of variables to enable disaggregation on organizational mandates

THEME: LINKAGES of datasets
- Engage and identify opportunities for data integration to fill gaps

Increasing interdepartmental collaboration to identify opportunities for alignment leads to adoption of common standards

THEME: UPTAKE OF STANDARDS
- Common agreement on standards
- Increase uptake of common standards where viable
- Co-develop guidance for adoption

THEME: Shared FRAMEWORKS
- Align with frameworks being developed for the GC (e.g., Data Quality Framework)
- Review organizational frameworks to see where we can align

Increasing data access and acquisition helps frame further opportunities for alignment on key data gaps, linkages and need for further disaggregation

Enhanced standards uptake increases interoperability between departments and systems, fostering interdepartmental literacy and increased trust through governance (universal data formats)

THEME: SIMPLIFY processes and timelines
- Simplify the processes for the data access and acquisition between departments through governance frameworks
- Larger-scale MOUs and LOAs through legal understanding

THEME: CURATE data fit for purpose
- Share each organization's data inventory and identify potential common use
- Review new data acquisition process for potential sharing opportunities

THEME: CULTURE
- Share data literacy strategies
- Increase data literacy at ESDC for standards and Increase program awareness at StatCan for implementation

THEME: GOVERNANCE through Privacy, Legal, and Ethics
- Enhance understanding of data acquisition process between the two organizations, including terms of use (privacy, confidentiality, and need-to-know principles, etc.)

Enhancing interdepartmental literacy increases the opportunity to simplify and coordinate data access and acquisition for secure data stewardship

Priority Actions - Scale Existing Projects
- ESDC Administrative Data Sharing and Linkage Roadmap

Priority Actions- Scale Existing Projects
- Exploratory pilot: improving FRDC vetting practices

Priority Actions- Scale Existing Projects
- Data Literacy Collaboration

Priority Actions- Scale Existing Projects
- Linked to the GC Working Group on Standards

Goals of the Joint Data Strategy

The framework was endorsed by ESDC's Deputy Minister and StatCan's Chief Statistician

The activities under each pillar contribute to:

- ✓ **Working more effectively, collaboratively, and strategically**

- ✓ **Aligning common organizational needs and streamlining processes and goals**

- ✓ **Optimizing data access, data sharing, data interoperability through common standards and best practices**

- ✓ **Identifying opportunities for continuous improvement and uses of data that will benefit both organizations and Canadians**

Benefits of the ESDC-StatCan Joint Data Strategy

The benefits of a joint ESDC-StatCan Data Strategy (high level, medium to long term):

- Reduce duplication of data collection, processing, and storage
- Provide more timely release of statistical output
- Demonstrate leadership on data use and re-use
- Drive data interoperability in the Government of Canada
- Provide better services to Canadians

How?

- Prioritize organizational needs to ensure interdepartmental alignment
- Inform employees on how to leverage the Strategy to work more effectively with data
- Incorporate alternative, cost-effective methods, such as data linkage projects
- Communicate progress to partners, reinforce our leadership in collaboration

ESDC-StatCan JDS Consultations

Consultations were held for each pillar with identified key contacts and experts from ESDC and StatCan.

Pillar	Purpose	Expected outcomes
Alignment	Identify common data needs and gaps and leverage multi-sources data availabilities	Enhanced collaboration, operational efficiency, and quality service to citizens
Standards	Advance the use common standards and frameworks	Increased data interoperability for higher quality analysis, decision and policy making
Data Literacy	Ensure data-users are equipped with the right skills and knowledge for data-use	Increased understanding of data, security and privacy, improving data maturity
Secure Access	Simplify and streamline data access processes between departments	Data that are easily accessible and shareable (can be used and reused) effectively through systems, platforms, with the right guardrails in place to ensure data security

Results of the Joint Data Strategy

Milestones

- **Documentation:** Framework and Roadmap endorsement

- **Consultation:** Alignment, Standards, and Literacy Pillars complete

- **Communication:** Multiple joint interdepartmental presentations

Outcomes

- ESDC has shared 13 administrative files with StatCan, available in the Research Data Centres (RDC) across Canada

- Over 60 policy, analysis, research and evaluation projects have used data derived from ESDC-StatCan **data linkages** this year

- An Exploratory Pilot enabling researchers to more quickly identify and **gain faster access to available data**

- ESDC and StatCan are **actively collaborating** on the Government of Canada's **Data Standards** Working Group, aligning their efforts with national policies.

- ESDC and StatCan are **sharing data literacy strategies**, contributing to higher quality literacy strategies for both organizations.

Lessons Learned

- High-level endorsement is vital

- A Terms of Reference substantiates guidelines

- Consult with subject matter experts regularly

- A Joint Data Strategy should be subject matter agnostic

- Communication is essential

- *A Strategy is not just a document.* **It is a living, breathing process that is agile**

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